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dear phil,

this is not the e.e.cummings in me. it is from almost chopping off my left thumb with a machete about 6 wks ago. guess i am just not a real che. it seems to be getting along well, and i am lucky to have it left. but from time to time the jarring of raising case is too much for it. in fact, i carried on a long and seemingly successful epistolary battle re: lattimer (thanks for enclosure) entirely in lower case! no infection set in until 11 days after stitching, when the stitches were removed. i let that heal itself, but when the member stayed swollen i went to the doctor. prognosis similar to that at hospital when it happened: probable damage but to tendons. i guess to connective tissue. more healing required before firm and final diagnosis can be made. have appointment with orthopaedic surgeon for 3/1. splits off for a week, but i am to be careful and not to press it against anything or vice versa, apparently the fear being that something can happen to the unsupported joint. the possibilities are that nothing can or should be done, that i might have to wear a brace to fend against stresses when they can be foreseen, or that surgery might be indicated to repair and remove whatever possibility there is of further hurt. but i have not had any pain at any time, including slicing. i was trimming out a storm-downed beautiful white pine, one of the larger ones near the house. it has been more of an annoyance than anything else, and it has slowed me down some.

the lattimer play remains a mystery because he is politically opposite the kenedys and their surrogate in this, the allegedly liberal burke marshall, who headed the civil-rights division under bobby. there has never been less interest, there was no demand and no legal need for it, he does not qualify under the contract said to control this, and even then regulations were violated to make it possible. i knew of this whole thing in advance and was able to take certain (lower-case) steps, one of which resulted in indirect acknowledgment of guilt by the national archives, which after the fact made the second change in the relevant regulations i have forced upon them to belatedly attempt to cover illegalities. i can't go into all of this, but i have completed my most definitive book on this and what relates to this evidence, titled post mortem. it is overly long, overly-disjointed (having been written in three different parts, first by 9/67, second in two weeks 1/69 and last recently), overly-passionate, but it is one helluva book and records a remarkable investigation, ranging from ransacking the archives to turning on unfriendly government officials to going to court as my own lawyer. it has what the warren commission did not. it has forced the government to destroy (literally) evidence, and it has the proof of that destruction. it also has no prospect. i am preparing it for the unlikelihood that i can find some concerned citizen willing to waste the money a private printig would cost. in the text and in an appendix i use facsimiles of what was withheld from the commission, what was said not to exist, etc. it is also a first draft, for i am working, save for having laid them aside for this, on several others ms simultaneously. it is the most definitive thing yet on j edgar hoover and his secret- and thought-police. and i have tried to make it a commentary on the entire society in which such things can and do happen. in short, by following the dictates of integrity, i have insured unpublishability. but it is one helluva job, one that ate the soul and taxed the imagination, a real challenge. save for the expression of passion, which i could not avoid and write at white heat, which means, really, that i had to write it the way i felt it or i would have been forever writing it, and the lack of time for rewriting it, which should be done, i am proud of what it represents. i suspect it is the real reason for the lattimer thing, for i have copyrighted xerox editions of the three parts as in each case it seemed expedient, in the first part when i gave it to garrison's staff to use in the shaw trial-the one good thing in it, as a matter of historical record.

glad to get the enclosure on thornley. he pretends to be a libertarian, as he puts it, or an anarchist, as carlos castillio puts it, but he is a man of violence and fascist persuasion. if i didnt tell you, i had supper with carlos when i was in n.o. right before thanksgiving. he put it this way: kerry was a good waiter and is a bad writer. he should have remained a good waiter...otherwise things are the same. we are tired, tiring more, bankrupt, without prospect, and still fighting and trying. hope things are better with you than free interpretation of your note might mean. apologies for typos. squeezing this in before lunch in a break in the endless work. sincerely,